

# epiTRENDS

A Monthly Bulletin on Epidemiology and Public Health Practice in Washington State

## 2003 Review Communicable Disease in Washington

The *Communicable Disease Annual Report* for 2003 is now available from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). This report reviews notifiable communicable diseases reported to DOH in 2003 and summarizes demographic, geographic, and other trends in Washington over the past five years. The DOH Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section received reports of 3,656 cases comprising 26 conditions in 2003.

Washington Administrative Code 246-101 defines legal requirements for disease reporting that form the foundation for disease surveillance and mandate healthcare providers, hospitals, clinical laboratories, and others to notify their local health jurisdictions (LHJs) of suspected or confirmed notifiable conditions within a specified time period. LHJs are required to report information regarding cases to DOH, which in turn submits disease reports to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The 2003 *Communicable Disease Annual Report* is online at [www.doh.wa.gov/notify](http://www.doh.wa.gov/notify). This site also has additional information about notifiable condition surveillance in Washington, including case definitions, a list of notifiable conditions, guidelines for reporting, case report forms, fact sheets, and other resources. Highlights of communicable disease surveillance in Washington in 2003 follow. See page 3 for data on nine diseases.

### Pertussis

The rate of pertussis has fluctuated considerably in recent years. In 2003, 844 cases of pertussis were reported (13.8 cases per 100,000 population) with 16 suspected or confirmed pertussis outbreaks in 2003, including nine in healthcare settings. This total constituted a significant increase from the 575 cases (9.5/100,000) reported in 2002 and a more than four-fold increase from 2001. To date, the rate for 2004 is comparable to 2003 data. The rate of pertussis is typically highest in young children who are inadequately immunized. In 2003, infants under 1 year of age had a high pertussis case rate of 142/100,000.

### Hepatitis B

Since the mid-1990s, the incidence of acute hepatitis B has declined in the United States and in Washington. In 2003, 90 cases of acute hepatitis B were reported (1.5/100,000) with one reported death. The rate was 1.9 times higher among males than females and higher among those 20–49 years of age, compared with other age groups. The rate of acute hepatitis B for 2004 has been lower than that of 2003.

### Foodborne Outbreaks

In 2003, 55 foodborne outbreaks affecting more than 620 persons were reported in Washington. Most outbreaks (84%) involved restaurant settings. Norovirus was responsible for 19 (34%) of the outbreaks and for more than half of all cases of foodborne illness that

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were reported to DOH. *Salmonella* was the most commonly confirmed bacterial agent causing foodborne illness in 2003 (16% of foodborne outbreaks). Factors contributing to the outbreaks included bare hand contact (33%), contamination by ill food handlers (18%), improper prior food preparation (15%), and contaminated raw product (15%).

**TABLE 1: Foodborne outbreaks by agent, 2003**

Agent	Outbreaks		Cases*	
	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Bacterial</b>				
<i>B. cereus</i>	3	5	9	1
<i>Campylobacter</i>	4	7	16	3
<i>E. coli</i>	2	4	8	1
<i>Salmonella</i>	9	16	84	14
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	4	7	56	9
Other bacterial	8	14	23	4
Chemical	0	0	0	0
Norovirus	19	34	399	64
Unknown	7	13	28	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>56**</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Includes cases with clinical symptoms matching an agent, but without laboratory confirmation.

\*\*An outbreak may have more than one agent identified.

### For More Information

The 2003 *Communicable Disease Annual Report* is available online at: [www.doh.wa.gov/notify](http://www.doh.wa.gov/notify).

### Other Infections of Interest

- **Mumps:** Between April and July 2003, Grant County had a mumps outbreak involving 10 related cases. The index case traveled to Haiti and was not immunized for mumps prior to travel. The Grant County Health District provided recommendations to contacts of the index case, which included students in a local school district. Fifty-two students and one employee were excluded from the school for 26 days and more than 300 persons were immunized with MMR vaccine. Isolation and quarantine measures proved to be difficult to enforce. This outbreak highlights the importance of adhering to recommended immunizations schedules, obtaining appropriate travel immunizations, timely reporting by health care providers to minimize exposures, and effective isolation and quarantine measures.
- **Rat Bite Fever:** In November 2003, a previously healthy 19-year-old female died of an unexplained illness in Thurston County. The illness was characterized by sudden onset of nausea, weakness, myalgias, and later numbness, and progressed to a state of delirium with labored breathing and jaundice. She died three days after initial onset of symptoms. Investigators found nine pet rats in her apartment. Testing of tissues at CDC identified the bacteria *Streptobacillus moniliformis*, which cause an infection commonly referred to as "rat bite fever." The bacteria are a normal constituent of the oral flora in healthy rats. Although most cases resolve within two weeks, approximately 13% of untreated cases are fatal. Illness or death occurring in previously healthy individuals 1–49 years of age with hallmarks of an infectious disease, no identified diagnosis, and severity requiring admission to an intensive care unit or resulting in death, must be reported immediately in Washington.

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# Annual Surveillance Data by County, 2003

Washington State Department of Health

County	E. coli O157:H7	Salmonella	Shigella	Campylobacter	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C	Meningococcal Disease	Pertussis
Adams	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	2
Asotin	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Benton	4	24	3	40	1	0	0	0	5
Chelan	0	5	1	8	0	0	0	1	2
Clallam	0	1	0	8	3	0	0	0	2
Clark	13	39	5	67	3	2	0	5	38
Columbia	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cowlitz	2	5	1	4	0	3	0	2	3
Douglas	0	7	0	4	1	2	0	0	0
Ferry	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Franklin	2	7	0	13	2	0	0	0	2
Garfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grant	2	7	5	24	3	0	0	0	0
Grays Harbor	1	9	0	14	1	1	0	1	0
Island	0	5	0	6	0	0	0	2	21
Jefferson	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	1
King	40	246	95	270	28	34	8	8	294
Kitsap	3	12	2	20	0	3	0	3	15
Kittitas	2	3	0	5	1	0	0	0	1
Klickitat	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1
Lewis	2	2	0	5	0	2	1	5	2
Lincoln	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mason	0	6	0	7	1	1	0	0	2
Okanogan	1	8	0	2	2	0	0	1	0
Pacific	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Pend Oreille	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pierce	6	64	21	32	6	5	3	10	211
San Juan	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	18
Skagit	5	8	1	19	0	2	0	4	45
Skamania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Snohomish	12	70	17	96	5	9	2	6	95
Spokane	10	30	10	67	4	12	1	4	4
Stevens	1	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
Thurston	7	17	1	25	3	3	4	1	13
Wahkiakum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Walla Walla	2	10	1	6	0	1	0	0	0
Whatcom	4	23	6	47	9	9	0	2	46
Whitman	0	2	1	5	1	1	0	0	2
Yakima	4	55	18	120	1	0	2	3	18
2003 Total	128	699	188	943	76	90	21	61	844
2002 Total	166	655	230	1032	162	83	27	76	575